

Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Announces Completion of Text-to-911 Trial with Sprint Nextel

May 29, 2013

Montpelier, Vt. – The text-to-911 trial with Sprint Nextel (“Sprint”) in the State of Vermont will end this Friday, May 31st. Sprint has determined its participation in the trial, ongoing since early December, 2012, must be completed to prepare for its voluntary commitment to make text-to-911 service available nationwide by May, 2014. As part of that commitment, by June 30th, 2013, Sprint also intends to implement a “bounce-back message” to subscribers nationwide for whom text-to-911 service is not currently available.

Both Sprint and the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board consider the trial in Vermont to be a success. It helped to demonstrate that this service can be delivered effectively for Sprint subscribers and should prove helpful in working toward permanent implementation of the service within a year. During the trial, no emergency text messages were received from Sprint subscribers in Vermont.

“We went into this trial with no expectation that it would be continued in the near term”, said David Tucker, Executive Director for the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board. “We had certainly hoped that would be the case, but there are good reasons to stop now so that Sprint can implement necessary technical changes that will enable the nationwide rollout next year.”

“As Sprint’s six-month participation in a trial of text-to-911 service comes to end in the State of Vermont, we want to reaffirm our commitment to exploring new emergency communication alternatives for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community,” said Mike Ellis, National Director for Sprint Relay Services. “Sprint looks forward to continued work on evaluating this short-term solution and extends a huge thanks to Vermont for giving us this unique collaborative opportunity.”

The Enhanced 9-1-1 Board is continuing to work with the wireless carriers on full text-to-911 service implementation statewide as soon as possible. All citizens and wireless subscribers are reminded that they should first attempt to make a voice call to 9-1-1 whenever possible during an emergency.